



# Rhode Island Department of Transportation



Annual Report  
1998

Lincoln Almond, Governor



Dear Rhode Islanders:

An efficient and safe transportation system is a top priority for me and my administration. The Department of Transportation has accomplished a lot in this area during the past year and I take great pleasure in recognizing their achievements.

Three of the five safety initiatives proposed during the 1998 Legislative Session took effect in 1999 including a graduated license for young drivers, a bike helmet law for children under the age of 15, and a \$30 penalty for failing to wear a seatbelt. The Department, in conjunction with the Office on Highway Safety, is working to see that the two remaining initiatives are passed in the 1999 legislative session. We want Rhode Island to join 16 other states that have declared drivers with a Blood Alcohol Level of .08 as being legally intoxicated and too impaired to drive. We are also working to enact stricter penalties on adult drivers who endanger children by driving drunk with a minor in the car, and to stiffen penalties for drivers who refuse to take a breathalyzer test.



**Governor Lincoln Almond**

The Department completed plans to improve response time to traffic congestion and incident management by building the Transportation Operations Center (TOC). This initiative includes installing 22 video cameras will be installed over the next year to monitor traffic flow on Interstates 95 and 195 and on Routes 6 and 10.

The relocation of Interstate-195 has begun. Upon completion, the project will reunite the city of Providence's Jewelry District with downtown and allow the Department to expand access to the waterfront.

This is also an exciting time for rail transportation in the state. The Federal Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century or TEA-21, approved last year, includes the authorization of \$25 million to develop a commuter rail service at T.F. Green Airport and an automated people mover providing passengers an alternate route to the airport. Renovations to the historic train stations in Kingston and Westerly were completed in 1997, preserving the state's link to its rail legacy.

I commend William Ankner for the excellent job he has done in his two-year tenure as Director of the Rhode Island Department of Transportation. Under his leadership, we have a staff of efficient and dedicated professionals are working to improve and safeguard our roads and highways.

I welcome any comments or suggestions you would like to provide. Your feedback is encouraged and extremely important to the success of the Department.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Lincoln C. Almond". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lincoln C. Almond  
Governor

## DIRECTOR'S NOTES

Our mission at the Rhode Island Department of Transportation is to maintain and provide a safe, efficient, environmentally, aesthetically and culturally sensitive intermodal transportation network that offers a variety of convenient, cost-effective mobility opportunities for people and the movement of goods supporting economic development and improved quality of life.

To achieve this mission, we have changed our philosophy from being a landlord and builder of highways and bridges to being a manager of our transportation system. This means that we must maintain and operate our transportation system to improve mobility and preserve our assets. This also means that we are part of a community and not an entity into ourselves. Thus, we must impart, make our transportation system aesthetically part of the community. It means creating financial opportunities to pay for our transportation infrastructure and to be financially responsible. It means that our word is our bond.



**William D. Ankner, Ph.D.**  
**RIDOT Director**

### **Promise**

To increase Maintenance Field Operations Staffing.

### **Action**

30 maintenance field operation employees were hired in the following areas:

- Bristol/East Providence - Total Five  
Four Motor Equipment Operators  
One Highway Maintenance Supervisor (Roads)
- Newport Division/Portsmouth - Total One  
One Drainage Basin Maintenance/Structural Repairs
- Northwest/Glocester - Total Five  
Four Motor Equipment Operators, One Heavy Motor Equipment Operator
- Northwest/Scituate - Total Three  
One Motor Equipment Operator  
Two Heavy Motor Equipment Operators
- Providence/Lincoln - Total Four  
Three Motor Equipment Operators  
One Drainage Basin Maintenance Structural Repairs
- Washington North/Belleville - Total Four  
Three Motor Equipment Operators  
One Drainage Basin Maintenance Structural Repairs
- Kent/Howard/MidState - Total One  
One Highway Maintenance Supervisor (Roads)
- Bridge/Traffic - Total Seven  
Seven Bridge/Traffic Maintenance personnel

### **Promise**

To acquire new equipment which will improve effectiveness of highway maintenance and winter operations.

**Action**

\$1,300,000 was allocated to equipment procurement.

**Promise**

To initiate a Bridge Maintenance Program to avoid premature deterioration.

**Action**

\$570,000 was allocated to bridge maintenance. Joint sealing work is being done statewide and a consultant is developing plans for a contract to perform the following actions in the spring of 1999 for completion in May of 2000:

- Wash I-95 bridge #550 over the Pawtucket River
- Wash the Henderson Bridge (Red Bridge) between East Providence and Providence.
- Wash six bridges at the easterly end of the Newport Bridge to remove excess pigeon droppings.

**Promise**

To Crack Seal Highways to prevent pavement deterioration.

**Action**

\$1,000,000 was allocated to crack sealing projects.

- Four projects were completed in 1998 in the Northern, Southern, Eastern and Western parts of the State totally approximately \$455,000.

**Promise**

To undertake a Resurfacing Program on roadways where it is cost-effective in extending pavement life.

**Action**

\$1,850,000 was allocated to resurfacing projects. Four contracts have been completed:

1. Route 94, Route 126, St. Paul Street
2. Airport Access Road, East Avenue, Route 216
3. Oaklawn Avenue
4. Mineral Spring Avenue

**Promise**

To improve the maintenance of highway storm drains to prevent flooding of roadways and the undermining of the pavement surface.

**Action**

\$150,000 was allocated to statewide drainage improvements.

- Work began in August in Cumberland, South Kingstown and Little Compton. Improvements are scheduled to be completed by May, 1999.

**Promise**

To improve the appearance of our highways by aggressively removing roadside litter.

**Action**

\$500,000 was allocated for litter removal projects.

- Additional vans are being lease-purchased to transport the work crews.
- The time workcrews are on the road has been increased by working Saturdays.
- The funding pays the costs of the inmate crews and the guards assigned to monitor their activities.

**Promise**

To use Turnpike and Bridge Authority (TBA) Funds to make improvements to roadway approaches to the Toll Bridges.

**Action**

\$10,000,000 was allocated to TBA projects.

Six contracts have been entered into for the following road improvements:

- Route 138, South Kingstown; Southwest/Beavertail, Jamestown; Coddington Highway, Newport; East Main Road; West Main Road; Route 77, Tiverton; Boyd Lane/Bristol Ferry, Portsmouth; Route 136 (portion) Bristol/Warren; Aquidneck Avenue/America's Cup Avenue/JT Connell Highway, Newport and Route 102, Westerly/Charlestown; Memorial Boulevard, Newport; Route 136 (remaining portion); Beavertail Road; Route 4/1, North/South Kingstown; and Valley Road, Middletown.

**Promise**

To shift highway fund personnel expenses from Bond Funds to Gas Tax Funds.

**Action**

\$1.5 million of gas tax funds has been utilized to pay for personnel costs in the Highway Fund.

**Promise**

To improve accountability by improving the Capital Planning Process.

**Action**

- Fiscally constrained proposed six-year Capital Transportation Plan published and widely distributed.
- Capital Program implementation assessed in Transportation Improvement Plan Implementation Status Report.
- Fiscal Year 1998 Proposed Capital Work Program Prepared and Distributed.





## FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

The finance section maintains oversight and administration of the Department's total operating and highway expenditures, which in fiscal year 1998 totaled \$205,608,200. This unit is also responsible for coordinating the timely submission of the Department's annual operating and capital development budgets.

This section is also responsible for insuring that:

- All activities of the Department are based on sound financial practices,
- Federal funds and other reimbursements are sought on a timely basis,
- Expenditures match the established programs of the Planning Division,
- All contracts, purchase orders, change orders and other contract commitments comply with federal and state law and regulations.

In fiscal year 1998, the position of Associate Director for Financial Management was created. The Associate Director serves as the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) of the Department, with oversight over all financial transactions. The CFO reports directly to the Director. The Department has historically functioned with a decentralized financial management system, with components of the accounts payable, accounts receivable, purchasing, planning, and contracts being performed by several diverse units in multiple divisions. The CFO concept plans to eventually bring coordination and standardization to the financial aspects of the Department.

### **Fiscal Year 1998 Accomplishments:**

- Performed 26 biweekly concurrent billings totaling \$87.1 million of federal-aid reimbursement;
- Obligated \$ 119 million federal-aid dollars for federal highway infrastructure improvements and related activities; Completed 56 federal-aid project final vouchers resulting in the de-obligation of over \$2 million. These funds were reallocated for other federal-aid projects;
- Implemented the Rhode Island State Infrastructure Bank;
- Integrally involved with the creation and implementation of the new Financial Management and project tracking system.

## OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS

The Office of Communications provides information on RIDOT to the media and legislature. As spokesperson for the Department, it is this section's purpose to respond expediently to requests for information. Through avenues like the media, the Office of Communications works diligently to keep the public informed of RIDOT projects. This section issued over 100 press releases in 1998.

The Office also coordinates special events that often include the Governor and the Congressional Delegation, writes speeches and handles all of the Department's legislative correspondence.

This section designs and maintains the Department's web site ([www.dot.state.ri.us](http://www.dot.state.ri.us)) featuring news and updates on RIDOT projects, links to local public transportation services, as well as information on statewide programs and special events. This year, the webmaster included access to contracting and engineering tools such as the RIDOT's Standard Specifications and bidding requirements.

The Office of Communications also publishes *Transportation Digest*, a quarterly newsletter that highlights RIDOT news and events and accomplishments of its employees.

## INTERNAL AUDIT

In 1998, Internal Audit was created as a separate section reporting to the Director of the Department of Transportation.

This office assists management in the efficient accomplishment of its stated goals by conducting independent reviews of operations to determine compliance with policies, procedures and applicable State law.

Internal Audit has been instrumental in the formation of a steering committee to address performance measures for the Department and continues to assist various units in this endeavor.

## GOVERNOR'S OFFICE ON HIGHWAY SAFETY

The Governor's Office on Highway Safety (GOHS) concentrated on youthful drivers and alcohol, seat belt and child passenger safety programs in 1998. In cooperation with the GOHS, law enforcement agencies conducted programs in 27 of the state's local communities and implemented an extensive public information campaign and education program to inform the public of Rhode Island's new seat belt law which took effect January 1, 1999.

This office also funded special Rhode Island State Police projects. These included special emphasis on aggressive driving and 55 m.p.h. speed limit enforcement, and Driving While Intoxicated (DWI) enforcement during the holiday travel season. The GOHS also continued use of the "Convincer program," in which a mechanical device simulates a 5 m.p.h. car crash in an effort to educate and heighten the public's awareness of the benefits of seat belt use.

The GOHS continued its mission to formulate public information and education programs, and legislative and administrative changes through the Rhode Island Traffic Safety Coalition, focusing on highway safety issues and helping to reduce death and injury on our State's highways.

The coalition is made up of nearly 50 groups and organizations, both public and private. Some members include volunteers from the American Automobile Association (AAA), Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD), State and local police, insurance companies, advocacy groups, hospitals, the General Assembly, the Governor's Office, the Lieutenant Governor's Office, the Attorney General's Office, the Rhode Island Departments of Health, Education and Transportation.

Based on the coalition's recommendations, Governor Almond announced five safety initiatives in December of 1997 to be introduced during the 1998 Legislative Session. The legislative package included: lowering the blood alcohol level for adults from .10 to .08, implementing a graduated driver's license for young drivers, expanding the age for mandatory bike helmet use, stiffening the penalty for drivers who refuse to take a breathalyzer test and for those who refuse to wear a seatbelt.

Of the five legislative initiatives set forth by the Governor, three became law in 1999 including a graduated license, a bike helmet law for children under the age of 15, and a \$30.00 seat belt penalty.

Fatalities in Rhode Island declined from 75 in 1997 to 74 in 1998. Most fatalities are related to alcohol use and non use of seat belts.



## OFFICE OF LEGAL COUNSEL

The Office of Legal Counsel provides legal services to the Department including the handling of all legal matters involving the Department or its staff. The office investigates and reviews tort and contract claims and, with the Attorney General, helps to defend those cases that end in court or arbitration. It drafts all Departmental legislation and tracks legislation affecting the Department through the legislative process. It drafts Departmental regulations and most Departmental procedures. It works with all Divisions in developing and negotiating contracts and agreements. In addition, in representing the Department in labor and environmental matters, it supplies information to the public under the Public Access to Records Statutes and to nondepartmental litigants in response to subpoenas.

This year the Office of Legal Counsel was particularly active in working with Design and Property & Right-of-Way to update boilerplate agreements, the passage of new State Highway Right-of-Way Regulations, matters related to construction of the Civic Center Ramps and continues to be involved in ongoing negotiations with AMTRAK regarding electrification and the Third Track as part of the Freight Rail Improvement Project (FRIP).

## HUMAN RESOURCES

The Office of Human Resources has the overall responsibility of administering a comprehensive human resource management program. The Office provides technical assistance and support to the Director and divisional administrators across a wide range of program functions; manages the personnel administration system; manages the labor relations and contract administration process; assures equal opportunity in program administration; administers, organizes, and coordinates staff development and training activities; coordinates various management initiatives; and oversees payroll and fringe benefit administration. The Office seeks to provide and support a quality workplace environment for all employees.

During 1997, the office planned and conducted a Summer Civil Engineering Employment Program. Nineteen students from the University of Rhode Island participated with seven students continuing into the academic year co-op program. We also completed and received approval from State Equal Employment Opportunity authorities for the Annual Affirmative Action Plan. The Office served as a lead agent among other state agencies for the administration of the Commercial Driver's License Drug and Alcohol Testing Program. Due to statutory changes, a joint labor management committee has been meeting to develop appropriate policy revisions. The staff also concluded labor contract negotiations with our three major collective bargaining agents. Work rule changes, health and safety items, overtime rules, and reorganization flexibility were some of the more notable terms addressed in each contract.

# Transportation Operations & Construction Division

## CONSTRUCTION OPERATIONS

The Construction Operations Section is responsible for the management of road and bridge construction, maintenance and rehabilitation projects.

A concerted effort was also made in striving to reduce the volume of project change orders and late completion of projects. The Construction Operations Section's staff increased their involvement and increased the number of projects that were reviewed for constructability. The Section performed a greater number of in-house Contract Time Determination studies of projects prior to advertisement utilizing the data gained through the Section's Project Schedule Monitoring efforts.

A procedure was implemented, in cooperation with Contract Administration and Purchasing, to make contractors aware that poor performance or non-responsiveness will effect their ability to receive future contract awards. Two contractors were called to task under this procedure during the 1998 season.

The Electrical Unit is responsible for specialized signal and lighting contracts and was involved with the construction of more than 250 signalized intersections. The Unit is currently managing the construction of 22 closed circuit video cameras and also the traffic signalization and camera installations in conjunction with the improvements to the ramps at I-95 exit 22.

The Construction Operations Section is divided into three districts for the management of highway and bridge projects. In District 1, the northern area of the State, rehabilitation work was completed on two bridges, the Mendon Road Bridge and Mineral Spring Avenue Bridge, with work on the I-295 Bridge over Route 146 to be completed early in 1999. Two other major bridge reconstruction projects have commenced, the rehabilitation of the Court Street Bridge which is scheduled to be completed at the end of 1999, and the rehabilitation of the Ashton Viaduct which is scheduled to be completed at the end of the year 2000. In addition, the first segment of the Blackstone Bike Path was completed. The safety improvement project at the Chapel Four Corners intersection was completed. The major project to reconstruct Route 44 has started; the work schedule calls for completion at the end of 1999. Many miles of roadway have been restriped and crack sealed.

In District 2, which encompasses the central portion of the State, improvements to I-95 between Route 10 and I-195 were completed. The section of I-95 in Pawtucket was resurfaced to the Massachusetts line. Temporary shoring to the Washington Bridge (I-195 east bound) and the Route 6/10 interchange bridges were completed. The rehabilitation of the Point Street Bridge was completed. Sections of Route 6 were resurfaced in Johnston and Providence along with Park Avenue and Cranston Street in Cranston. In Warwick, Post Road at the Airport and Cowesett Road were reconstructed. The Post Road extension was resurfaced and the reconstruction of Post Road in Apponaug began. Various roads in Coventry, West Warwick, Warwick, and Providence were resurfaced. The reconstruction of County Road in Barrington has started and will be completed in 1999.

District 3, the southern area of the State, handled five bridge reconstruction projects. This District

also managed the reconstruction of Main Street (Wakefield), roadway and sidewalk reconstruction in the Port of Galilee, the reconstruction of Main and Broad Streets (Westerly), and the long awaited reconstruction of Southwest Avenue and Beavertail Road (Jamestown). Six resurfacing projects, a bike path, one train station rehabilitation, and one landscape maintenance contract (South Kingstown) also were handled by District 3. This district also with manages the Statewide Striping Program.

In addition to the three districts, the Construction Operations Section is responsible for the I-95 Ramp Access Improvements. This group of projects will improve various roadway segments currently served by Exit 22 on Interstate 95, in the City of Providence. The projects will include a new highway ramp serving Kinsley Avenue, improvements to portions of Dean Street, Kinsley Avenue, Memorial Boulevard, and Francis Street, as well as the ramps feeding Routes 6/10 from both directions on the Interstate. The highway improvements, with the exception of the new highway ramp serving Kinsley Avenue from Route 95 south, are scheduled to be completed by August 18, 1999.

## **MAINTENANCE OPERATIONS**

The maintenance of roads and bridges was a major focus for the Department resulting in crack sealing projects which totaled more than \$500,000. Pavement overlay projects were active throughout the state placing more than \$3.5 million worth of new pavement on the roadways. For the first time, the Department awarded a bridge washing contract to remove chlorides and other deleterious material from a number of our bridges.

The Division accepted delivery of 31 new pieces of equipment including:

- 1 spray truck
- 3 loaders
- 10 tractors
- 14 utility vehicles
- 4 stake body trucks

In addition, the prototype for the twenty-two trucks that were ordered early in the year was delivered for review. The first vehicle, which has been accepted, is now in service in the Foster/Glocester area.

The Federal Highway Administration participated in the Department's maintenance program providing funding for a two-year program of sweeping and cleaning of catch basins on interstate highways and on several other controlled access primary routes. The program is a demonstration program to determine whether vacuum sweepers may have a beneficial impact on water quality if used instead of the conventional broom sweepers. The vacuum sweepers may remove more of the fine material from the roadway and, consequently reduce the amount that enters the state's wetlands, streams, and other water bodies.

In addition to new equipment, the Department has continued efforts to fill all vacancies in the Division of Maintenance. The new positions have been created, posted, and new employees continue to be hired. Due to continuing departures the Division has not yet seen a noticeable increase in personnel, however, for the first time in years, the loss by attrition has been stopped. The Division's hiring efforts have continued to foster increased diversity of our work force.

For the past four years, field efforts have focused on sweeping, litter removal, and grass cutting with an emphasis on the interstates. Also, scrub growth and junk "trees" have been cleared from the

roadside of I-95 beginning at the Rhode Island/Massachusetts state line and continuing beyond the Providence urban area. Much of the work this past year has been in the Pawtucket area of I-95. The program to control weeds under guardrail was again expanded and showed good results.

**The year's efforts resulted in the following accomplishments:**

- 5,897 miles of roadway were swept.
- Litter was picked up along 2,665 miles of roadway.
- 3,342 swath miles of grass were cut.
- Pothole repairs for the year numbered more than 34,500.
- More than 40,113 feet of roadside drainage ditches were cleaned and 6,883 drainage basins were cleaned.
- Approximately 36,000 feet of drainage lines were cleaned by the sewer jet.
- Sign crews installed/repaired/replaced 2,975 signs.
- The Bridge Inspectors performed 400 bridge inspections, plus an additional 45 structures less than 20 feet in length during the year.

## **TRANSPORTATION OPERATIONS CENTER**

The Rhode Island Department of Transportation continues to invest in Intelligent Transportation Operating Systems in order to manage increased congestion and improve air quality on state roads. In February 1998, RIDOT completed construction of the Transportation Operation Center (TOC) and began transitioning RIDOT employees into the facility to work on startup operations and to negotiate a professional service contract.

After following State bid award procedures, RIDOT signed a two year Transportation Operation Support contract with Frederick R. Harris and Dunn Engineering Consulting firms. The contract provides for transitioning state personnel into the TOC over the course of two years. This is to be accomplished through the use of the two firms and their support staff, who will provide start-up services identified with operational, technical, and system support. The consultant team has support staff located at the TOC engaged in work that includes developing operational policies, procedures and training manuals, ongoing research and analysis, identifying potential funding sources, and providing system software and hardware support. By taking this major step, RIDOT ensures that the TOC will have an effective day-to-day operation, ensures the continuity, integrity, and efficiency of the systems, and enables the effective communication and coordination within the department, with other state agencies, city and towns, and the private sector.

### **VARIABLE MESSAGE SYSTEMS**

RIDOT continues to operate and test eight portable variable message boards. The boards are centrally controlled at the Transportation Operation Center. Design is underway to add ten overhead permanent variable message boards to the system. The preliminary sites for this second phase of installation of boards is in the vicinity of: I-95 north bound south of Rte 117; I-95 north bound south of Rte. 10; and I-95 north bound south of Thurbers Avenue. Additional sites are being reviewed to gain optimum information processing utility.

The variable message boards are part of an entire system that will include a combination of overhead permanent changeable signs and the eight portable changeable signs. These signs will be used during special events, planned incidents, and unplanned incidents to warn motorists of upcoming roadway congestion and to divert them to alternate routes, if necessary.

All of the boards located or to be located within the year in the Providence Metropolitan area will connect to a central controller in the TOC. The ten overhead permanent boards will be installed on overhead trusses capable of handling the weight of two signs installed in opposite directions for maximum coverage. The ability to instantly change messages eliminates the need for personnel to drive to the site of a board to change a message. The graphic capabilities also enables them to display universal messages to accommodate the ever-increasing diversity of traffic now using Rhode Island highways.

RIDOT is presently working with the Connecticut DOT and Mass Highway to secure a grant from the I-95 Corridor Coalition to study the issues involved with sharing variable message board systems across state borders. It is recognized that the effect of traffic crossing borders prompts a cooperative action. At present, the request for grant funding is underway and, if approved, RIDOT will be the lead agency in this deployment activity.

### **HIGHWAY ADVISORY RADIO**

RIDOT's TOC personnel successfully operate three highway advisory radio transmitters on I-95 at Route 2, I-95 at I-195, and I-295 at Route 146. The transmitters allow RIDOT to broadcast messages on frequency 1610 AM within a three mile radius. The transmitters can handle multiple messages, can be sequentially timed, and most importantly, can be activated remotely. The two permanent radios, located on I-95 and on I-295 at Route 146, were purchased by the I-95 Corridor Coalition as part of a regional test of Highway Advisory Radios (HAR) effectiveness. The third was purchased as part of RIDOT's initial Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) investment. Plans are ongoing to add to the complement of radios. This is based on the success RIDOT has experienced with the operational highway advisory radio system. Since Rhode Island is virtually surrounded by water, the range of the broadcast is significantly enhanced prompting the consideration to add to the present HAR system.

### **CLOSED CIRCUIT VIDEO SURVEILLANCE**

RIDOT has awarded a contract to install 22 closed circuit video surveillance systems that will be deployed by November 1999. The cameras are being installed on I-195, I-95, and Rte. 10. An additional three cameras are being installed on the Improved Ramp Project in the Memorial Boulevard section of Providence. These added cameras will work with the 22 camera system and will be on line by September 1999. The camera system RIDOT is deploying is unique in that it is incorporating a software called "Traffic Vision" developed by a Rhode Island based company, NESTOR. The software enables RIDOT to use the cameras for incident surveillance, traffic counts and classification. This system eliminates the need for loop detectors in roadways where it is not feasible to maintain this type of detection equipment. The three cameras being installed in the Providence downtown will work with an upgraded signal, enabling TOC operators to better manage traffic during peak hours, special events, or unplanned incidents. This inclusion of cameras on a highway project is a step the department is taking to gradually develop a "Rhode Island Smart Highway System."

### **INTERNET WEB SITE**

Once the cameras are installed, the images will be available on RIDOT's internet web site. Real time traffic information, including real time snapshots from the CCTV transmissions will be available.

### **ARTERIAL SIGNAL SYSTEMS**

The department is designing signal upgrades throughout the state. The upgrades are intended to

synchronize signals and interface the signal controllers with the TOC. Operators will then be able to, based on pre-planned diversionary routes and pre-planned timing schedules, control the signals from the Center during major congestion caused by special events or incidents. The cameras will ensure the effectiveness of our overall ITS statewide plan. Upgraded signals that are on primary routes, for example, will be managed from the TOC by operators who can take control of the signals to eliminate the “stop and go” that contributes to increased traffic congestion during incidents. Diversionary routes such as Bald Hill Road will also have enhanced arterial signal systems coupled with camera surveillance that will link back to the TOC.

## **MATERIALS**

In 1998, the Materials section began to experience the effects of TEA-21 in the amount of work that was monitored. Since October 1997, to date, this section has added three prestress plants, three concrete plants and an asphalt plant. Workload increased 50% from 2,450 in 1997 to 3,645 in 1998. Also, the amount of asphalt produced, measured in tonnage, jumped from 197,400 in 1997 to 456,000 in 1998, a 131 percent increase.

### **Achievements in 1998:**

#### **AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF STATE HIGHWAY AND TRANSPORTATION OFFICIALS (AASHTO)**

RIDOT received accreditation from AASHTO for 1998 through June of 1999. Accreditation requires participation in laboratory inspections, round robin testing and documentation of laboratory policies, organization, calibrations, proficiency, etc.

Many of RIDOT specifications are directly related to the AASHTO Materials Specifications. RIDOT Materials staff worked on the 19<sup>th</sup> edition of the AASHTO Subcommittee on Materials Specification and Test Manuals. Work on this committee is critical to ensure that the specifications are complete and meet this section’s needs. During the past year, Materials worked on the Task Force on Committee Function, Chaired Task Forces on Strategic Planning of the Subcommittee on Nuclear Testing, on Soils, and the Chaired Technical Section on Hydraulic Cements and Pozzolanic Materials.

Efforts began in 1998 to host next year’s Annual Meeting of the AASHTO Subcommittee on Materials. RIDOT will be host to some 100 engineers from around the country for 1999’s meeting which will be held at the Providence Westin Hotel.

#### **STRATEGIC HIGHWAY RESEARCH PROGRAM (SHRP)**

The SHRP asphalt laboratory was completed in 1998. This new facility enables for the testing of asphalt binders and mixtures according to the SHRP criteria. The Materials section also instituted the use of SHRP graded binder on all State Projects. With the cooperation of the City of Providence and their consultants, Materials placed the first SHRP Mixture in the State.

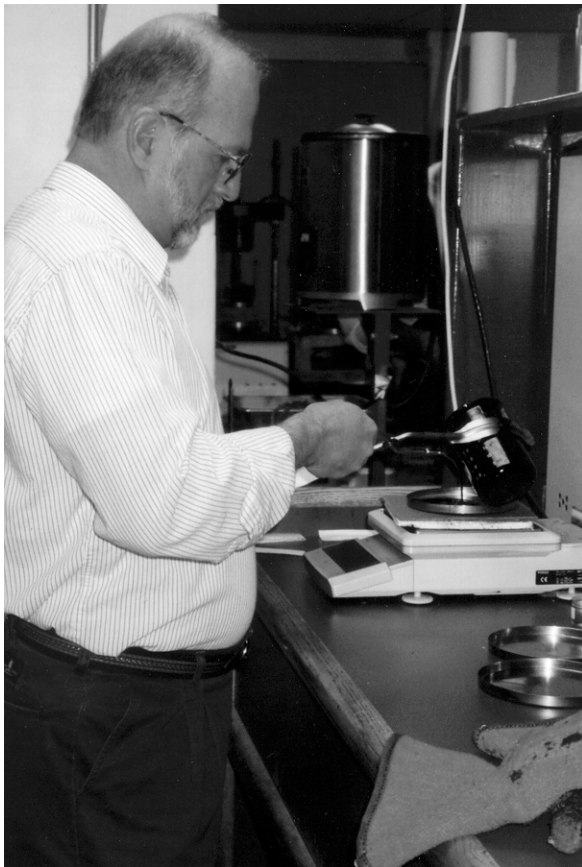
#### **MASTER SCHEDULE FOR SAMPLING AND TESTING (MST)**

This section produced and distributed the MST book based upon the new Federal Regulations after being approved by the Federal Highway Administration.

### **SAFETY**

Staff in the Materials Section completed an inventory of chemicals used, removed all old and unused





**CHECKING SAMPLES** of asphalt which will be used for paving is Ray Dulac of the RIDOT Materials Division.

chemicals and developed a system to track chemical usage. A Committee was also instituted to address safety concerns.

## **COMPUTERS**

The Materials Section held in-house training courses in computers, as part of our continued expansion in asphalt and concrete plants. Also continuing is expansion of the system to include tracking most of the lab and field samples; all samples brought into the laboratory are logged in on the computer.

## **STATE EMPLOYEES CHARITABLE APPEAL (SECA)**

RIDOT received the Hope Award for the best overall campaign in state government and an Honorable Mention in the Per Capita Category. Materials engineer, Mark Felag, also received a Governor's Citation for Exceptional Effort and Commitment to the Campaign. For the 1998 campaign, the Materials Section raised over \$810,000, beating last year's record amount and RIDOT raised over \$45,000, which was 15 percent more than last year's record amount. Overall, the 1998 campaign raised over \$810,000, approximately 10% more than last year's amount.

## **TRANSPORTATION AND CIVIL ENGINEERING (TRAC)**

Materials engineer, Haytham Awad, received national recognition for his work on the TRAC program.

## **FIELD TESTING**

Materials instituted the use of Thin-Life Nuclear Gauges to determine asphalt density on thin-lift asphalt pavement placements.

## **ASPHALT PLANTS**

Materials now requires by specification, Ignition Testing in plans for asphalt content and 12" sieves for aggregate gradation. This will move the section away from solvents and give more accurate results while allowing for better monitoring of contractors' operations.

## **SURVEY**

The Survey section is responsible for providing precise surveys and statewide construction stakeouts for the construction projects. This section performs all the surveys according to Procedural and Technical Standards for the Practice of Land Surveying in the State of Rhode Island. Also, this section is responsible for disseminating Survey information to professional land surveyors, civil

engineers, and the general public pertaining to Highway Plats, Field books, Legal Descriptions, and Geodetic Control Data.

#### **Major Milestones - FY 1998**

- Training classes were planned specifically targeted for “Field to Finish” through the use of electronic field data collection and computer aided drafted and design programs.
- Proposed the purchase of Global Positioning Systems (GPS). This system could be the primary instrumentation of the Control Survey Unit, eliminating the need for high-order Total Station instruments now in use. Acquisition of GPS equipment would increase the productivity of the survey crew, thus making it a good investment in capital management.

## **FINAL REVIEW**

The final review section is a multifunctional unit that has been expanded to include: review of records, monitoring and inspection efforts and supportive services to other sections.

This section is responsible for review and verification of quantities of all contract items and to ascertain the validity of payment of certain entries based on standard specifications and the special provisions of each contract. In addition, this section is responsible for the monitoring and inspection of Federal Aid Highway Projects in accordance to the Internal Oversight Agreement with the Federal Highway Administration.

These efforts are accomplished by:

- The monitoring and inspection of construction projects to ascertain adherence or compliance to established state and federal standards and guidelines.
- Coordination with various sections and personnel in order to develop procedures and programs which will result in more effective and efficient methods and procedures.
- Establishment of procedures to insure the uniformity and consistency in the application of methods, specifications, interpretations and compliance to the Rhode Island Standard specifications, RIDOT Procedures for Uniform Record Keeping and the *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices*.
- Following up on previous review findings and recommendations relative to reviewers’ findings, inspection findings, safety reviews, or other issues.

## **WORK ZONE SAFETY PATROL**

This section developed modified procedures and guidelines to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Work Zone Traffic Control Safety Patrol. Changes have resulted in increased response time, more coverage and significant savings in cellular telephone usage.

Seven final personnel were certified as Work Zone Traffic Control Supervisors by the American Traffic Safety Services Association (ATSSA).

Members of the Work Zone Safety Patrol have trained nearly all personnel of the Construction, Maintenance, Materials and Survey Sections in the Standards and Guidelines of Work Zone Traffic Control Devices.

The Work Zone Safety Patrol has continued to monitor all Work Zone Control on Consulting Engineers’ fieldwork. The efforts of the Work Zone Safety Patrol have contributed significantly to the quality of work zone traffic control in Rhode Island.

# Engineering Division

## DESIGN

The Design Section is responsible for the preparation of engineering plans, specifications and estimates for the construction and reconstruction of Rhode Island's state-owned and maintained highways, bridges, traffic signal systems, and bicycle and pedestrian paths. This work also includes coordination with the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, the Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council, the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, all 39 cities and towns and various citizen advocacy groups. The Design Section coordinates with various Federal agencies, notably the Federal Highway Administration, the Army Corps of Engineers, the U. S. Coast Guard and the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency. The Design Section is also responsible for producing landscape designs for safe highways, providing staff for the Scenic Highway Board, and the review of Utility Permits, Land Sales Requests and Physical Alteration Permit Applications (PAPA).

The Design Section successfully advertised and bid-opened 72 projects with an amount of \$89,515,277 in total construction costs. For 1998, this office also processed 196 Physical Alteration Permit Applications (PAPA). The number of PAPA's increased by 8% from 1997's number of 180.

### **Major Accomplishments include:**

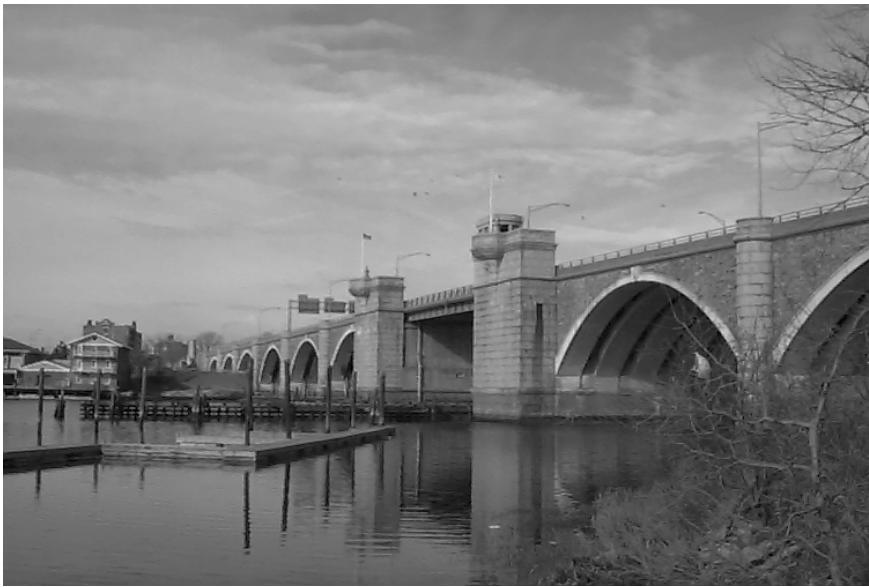
- Published new Standard Details which were last updated in 1973. These new Details are available on CD-ROM.
- Resurfaced
  - Route 6
  - Route 10
  - Route 4/US 1
  - Interstate 295
- Initiated Crack Sealing Program to help prevent early pavement failures.

## BRIDGE ENGINEERING

The Bridge Engineering Section has had a very active design program this past year, working on over 100 bridges with more than 15 design consultants. The challenges to get these projects to construction has always been difficult with the ever increasing changes in regulations from the various regulatory agencies.

### **The following bridge projects amounting to \$26 million did go to construction in 1998.**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. Meeting House Bridge No. 199            | 7. Shannock Road bridge No. 149             |
| 2. Cranston St. Railroad Bridge No. 938    | 8. Roger Williams Ave. RR Bridge No. 923    |
| 3. Court St. Bridge No. 959                | 9. Phenix Ave. Bridge No. 413               |
| 4. Mendon Road Bridge No. 751              | 10. Rt. 6/Rt. 10 Temporary Shoring/Repair   |
| 5. Temporary Column Shoring Bridge No. 200 | 11. Joseph A. Russo Memorial Bridge No. 275 |
| 6. Louisquisset Pike Bridge No. 748        | 12. Improved Ramp Access/Interstate 95      |



**Washington Bridge**

In addition, this section continued with the development of plans for the Washington Bridge No. 200, Barrington and Warren Bridges, Sakonnet River Bridge and the bridges on Interstate 195 and Interstate 295, and several other projects which are scheduled for construction in 1999 and 2000.

This section also reviewed Overweight Vehicle Permits for the Registry of Motor Vehicles, AMTRAK's Northeast Corridor Electrifi-

cation, which affects more than 60 State bridges, the Quonset Point/Davisville Highway System and their 13 new bridges, the Rhode Island Freight Rail Improvement Project (FRIP) with approximately 80 structures, and coordination with the Construction Section with major ongoing construction projects such as Washington Bridge No. 700 and Interstate 95.

In addition to the normal bridge program, two major bridge projects were advertised - Court Street Bridge and the Ashton Viaduct.

A program of "Smart" traffic signals was started which included interconnections on major arterial routes. Video cameras were also added.

The major project for 1998 was the start of construction on the I-95 ramps at the Civic Center Interchange to accommodate traffic from the ongoing development within the Capitol Center District.

## **TRAFFIC AND SAFETY MANAGEMENT**

The Traffic and Safety Management Section is responsible for traffic engineering applications, providing highway information, and also takes on specialized projects.

The Traffic Engineering Unit continues to insure that all highways are clearly marked with high quality material under the yearly pavement-marking program. To promote efficiency of the current roadway infrastructure in response to increasing vehicular volumes, Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) are being deployed. This includes installation of computer controlled arterial closed loop traffic signal systems on high volume state highways. Another important initiative begun is the replacement of directional signs along limited access highways.

The Highway Information Unit prepares yearly submittals to the Federal Highway Administration on the Highway Performance Monitoring System (HPMS). It also monitors traffic on the highway system by a network of permanent counting stations, isolated manual counts, and mobile tube counters. Another form of information is provided through the Weigh In-Motion (WIM) program

where vehicle weights and/or speed can be measured through the use of strategically located remote stations. Accident data is tabulated and distributed by the Highway Information Unit for RIDOT to use as a tool for safety related programs. Finally, the Pavement Management System uses biannual highway recording coupled with computer aided analysis to provide yearly recommendations on methods for extending the life of pavement surfaces.

Under the Special Projects Unit, innovative ITS programs are advanced. This unit provides the latest ITS technology in support of the Transportation Operations Center (TOC). It also includes an initiative where vehicular accident data will be collected and disseminated electronically through computerized links between local police, State Police, the Rhode Island Department of Motor Vehicles and RIDOT.

**Among the projects advanced to construction by the Traffic and Safety Management Section in 1998 are:**

- Statewide optimization of isolated traffic signals.
- Closed loop arterial system deployment to several high volume state highways.
- Statewide pavement markings program.
- Deployment of Closed Circuit Video Equipment (CCVE) at 22 sites for congestion and incident monitoring by the TOC, along limited access highways in Providence.

## RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT

The Research and Technology Development Section is responsible for articulating and implementing selected research and technological advances emanating from state, regional, and national studies. Regional and national involvements include membership on the AASHTO Standing Committee on Research as well as chairing and serving as panel members of technical committees for the New England Transportation Consortium, the Northeast Protective Coatings Committee, and the National Cooperative Highway Research Program. In-house activities include working closely with Design and Construction Operations in formulating specifications and in the review of designs proposing new methods and technologies where appropriate.

During 1998, special projects and assignments included assessment of ten-year-old highways, permeability of concrete, performance evaluation of structural concrete mixes, structural steel recoating systems, high performance concrete, surface cracking on micro silica decks, modified friction course pavements, and crack sealing.

Through this section's research efforts, mechanically stabilized earth retaining wall technology has been incorporated into three RIDOT projects. In the area of concrete durability, RIDOT was instrumental in making changes to specifications resulting in the elimination of cracks on new bridge decks. The Research and technology Development section is also coordinating the Pavement Preservation Program to have a more viable program for the state. This began with a series of crack sealing projects and will progress to the microsurfacing of several Block Island roads.

The American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials presented the Highway Assessment Team, chaired by members of the Research and Technology Development section, a Pathfinder award for its work on the assessment of five-year-old highways.



# Policy & Planning Division

The Policy & Planning Division consists of four sections, Capital Programming, Strategic Planning, Intermodal Planning and Community Affairs. One of the Division's major roles is to provide policy guidance to the Director and the entire Department on national, regional and State transportation and financing policy issues. Division staff serves as the Department's representatives on national, regional and State transportation policy and planning committees. Staff within the Division successfully guided the Department's response to the reauthorization of the federal transportation legislation, the Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (TEA-21) that will affect funding of the Department's Capital Program for the next five years.

## CAPITAL PROGRAMMING/STRATEGIC PLANNING

The Capital Programming and Strategic Planning Sections work hand in hand in developing and monitoring a fiscally responsible Capital Program which is delivered on time and within budget. The Capital Programming Section is charged specifically with developing the Six Year Capital Transportation Improvement Program and Capital Budget for the Department. The Section works with Statewide Planning to develop and monitor the three year State Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and the long-range Ground Transportation Plan. In addition, the Capital Programming Section is responsible for ensuring that the State's TIP remains within budget and complies with all air quality conformity requirements. The goal of the Section is to develop and monitor the RIDOT Capital Transportation Program which best meets the transportation needs of the State's citizens and remains within the financial resources available to RIDOT.

A key product of the Capital Programming Section is the TIP for 1999-2001. Through a cooperative effort with Statewide Planning, the new TIP was developed to allocate the funds coming to the State of Rhode Island from the Federal Highway Administration through TEA-21. This TIP focuses on projects designed to preserve and manage our existing transportation resources while providing funds for economically important new transportation projects including the Relocation of I-195, the Civic Center Ramp, the Quonset Access Road and the Third Track projects.

The Strategic Planning Section monitors RIDOT capital projects to ensure that projects are consistent with our available financial resources. Strategies are developed for controlling project expenditures and managing State and Federal capital funds to improve cash flow. Strategic Planning also analyzes, develops, implements and manages projects to bring improved management methods and tools to RIDOT, including the development of a new Financial Management and Project Tracking System.

### **During 1998, the Policy & Planning Division accomplished the following through the Division Office and the Capital Programming and Strategic Planning Sections:**

- Succeeded in incorporating the Department's interests into the Statewide Transportation Planning activities including the development of the TIP and Ground Transportation Plan. Completed Phase I (planning study) of the Financial Management and Project Tracking System (FMPTS) project which will result in the installation of a fully integrated financial management system within RIDOT.
- Secured financing of FMPTS implementation.
- Produced weekly and monthly reports on the financial position of the Department.



- Succeeded in developing a TIP that meets the transportation needs of the State.
- Managed the Highway Fund's cash flow in a fiscally responsible manner.
- Updated the RIDOT Six Year Capital Plan. Secured TIP amendments for important Statewide Transportation Projects.



**Kingston Intermodal Station**

## **INTERMODAL PLANNING**

With the passage of TEA-21, \$25 million was authorized to develop an Amtrak/commuter train station at T.F. Green Airport in Warwick. The project consists of a train station and automated people mover system to connect the train station to the Airport terminal. An Environmental Assessment (EA) was begun, along with conceptual renderings of the proposed station. Three public meetings were held with interested agencies and neighbors to solicit input during the project development phase.

Renovation of both the Kingston Station and the Westerly Station was completed in 1998. The Kingston Station, built in 1875, was completely renovated and relocated away from the tracks. The Westerly Station, built in 1912, was also completely renovated, including parking and landscaping improvements.

Rehabilitation of the Newport Secondary Track was completed in July, 1998. An emergency construction contract was developed in-house, and work was completed to provide safe Dinner Train operations.

## **BICYCLE UNIT**

The statewide bicycling guide "A Guide to Cycling in the Ocean State" is being updated by RIDOT staff in preparation for the second printing this spring. Due to the great demand for this publication, 100,000 copies of the next edition will be printed. New to this edition are inset maps for several bike paths that have been recently constructed or will be completing construction soon, as well as information concerning roadway grades.

Plans and specifications were completed in-house on Contract 1 on the Washington Secondary Bike Path in Cranston. In 1998, the Rhode Island National Guard was employed and completed extensive clearing and grading along the five mile path. Also, the Guard completed the redecking of the Mes-hanticut Brook Railroad Bridge and began the redecking of the Wilbur Avenue Railroad Bridge.



**Westerly Intermodal Station**

## **TRANSIT UNIT**

The study to recommend strategies to coordinate fixed route and paratransit services was completed. As part of the study both systems were thoroughly reviewed and recommendations made to streamline operations as well as to begin the coordination effort.

The RIdE program completed its first full year as a statewide system providing paratransit services to elderly, disabled and low income individuals. RIdE provides shared ride services for the Department of Elderly Affairs, Human Services and MHRH and RIPTA. Over 550,000 trips were provided.

RIPTA continues to administer the State's Rideshare program called Express Travel. All state agencies in Providence were provided with an event to inform employees of the benefits of shared rides (carpools, vanpools and transit) and to sign on for these types of services. Also a Commuter Check conference was held to market the new tax benefits available to employers and employees. The pre-tax benefit allows the employer to provide employees with access to up to \$65/month in transit fare media. This can be used in lieu of providing free parking at the work site.

## **WATER TRANSPORTATION**

In 1998, the Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Newport Marine Terminal Project was presented at a public meeting and approved. It was also approved by regulatory agencies, other interested parties and FHWA who rendered a Record of Decision permitting the project to proceed. The sites that have been selected include a hub at Long Wharf with a Harbormaster/Public Building and pier as well as a destination area at Fort Adams State Park where improvements to the Visitor's Center as well as pier rehabilitation and construction are planned.

This section also received approximately \$1 million in federal ferryboat discretionary monies to provide ferry service between Pawtucket and Providence. This will begin in July, 1999.

Additionally, RIDOT received FBDG monies of approximately \$1 million for a Narragansett Bay Ferry Commuter Service and approximately \$700,000 for development of a ferry pier at Town Landing in Pawtucket.

## **ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM**

Construction began in 1998 on the Market Square Common Project in downtown Woonsocket, which includes a new pavilion, landscaping, bicycle racks, signage and exhibits at the Blackstone River Bikeway Terminal. Also, construction began on the Johnston Memorial Park Walking Trail, which includes the extension of the walking trail to provide an alternate route from the Johnston High School and the Ferri Middle School.

## COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

The purpose of the Community Affairs office is to serve as a liaison between the citizens of Rhode Island and the Rhode Island Department of Transportation. This is accomplished through activities such as community meetings, written media interaction, business contacts and ongoing communication with local public officials. By responding as quickly as possible to inquiries about road projects, the office also serves as a problem resolution clearinghouse.



**Groundbreaking at South County Bike Path**

In 1998, the Community Affairs office organized approximately 35 public meetings including four private meetings on high impact projects (i.e., Wolf Rock Railroad Bridge, Point Street Bridge, Washington Bridge, and I-95 resurfacing). The office has printed 74,931 brochures and project fact sheets that inform the public of RIDOT's varied activities.

# Administrative Services Division

## THE OFFICE OF CIVIL RIGHTS

The Office of Civil Rights maintains an ambitious program of minority and disadvantaged business growth and enhancement programs as well as training and educational programs designed to improve access by all citizens to transportation career fields. This office also monitors contractor compliance with Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) targets and goals.

RIDOT Supportive Services continues to expand and has formed a partnership with the Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI) and the University of Rhode Island (URI). RIDOT Supportive Services Program, CCRI and the Associated General Contractors of Rhode Island have established an Associates Degree program for minority and women-owned businesses in Construction Management Technology. The courses, which include Cost Estimating and Production Control, Contract Law and Blueprint Reading were chosen to meet the demands of construction owners.

RIDOT Supportive Services is once again sponsoring the Annual Contract Opportunities Fair. In its third year, this event continues to grow and gives unique opportunities for Prime Contractors, Sub-contractors, to come together and discuss future RIDOT construction projects.

In 1999, the Department will seek to expand the Emerging Business Program to include various types of construction related equipment. This program has proved itself to be a reliable and successful way to assist minorities in the ownership of a small business.

RIDOT's On-the-Job Training Program assists women and minorities in obtaining career opportunities in highway construction. Proper training and appropriate upgrading of women in the transportation construction industry is the primary objective of this program. Since September of 1997, RIDOT's On-the-Job Program has been administered by the Transportation Education and Economic Development Section with the assistance of the consultants, SER-Jobs for Progress, Inc. and is funded by RIDOT through Federal Highway Training Special Provisions.

This upcoming year promises to be one of growth with the RIDOT Transportation Research Activities Centers (TRAC) program. Educators at the Hanley School Technical Program will be utilizing the TRAC program as a spring board for implementing a pre-engineering technical program at Hanley, a predominately minority school with the goal of encouraging minority and female student to seek careers in transportation engineering fields. The partnership between RIDOT and URI School of Engineering will also participate in this endeavor.

## REAL ESTATE AND PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

The Real Estate Unit is responsible for the acquisition of land and easements required for the construction and reconstruction of the State Highway System in accordance with the Federal Highway Administration Guidelines and the General Laws of the State of Rhode Island. Responsibilities include:

- Real Estate Appraisal
- Review Appraisal
- Negotiations
- Relocation

Additionally, this section has significant input into the review and comment process of highway



location studies, draft of Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), development of preliminary right of way cost and relocation estimates, contracting for title examinations and, when necessary, handling the functional replacement of a “special use facility” located within the right of way.

## PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

This unit is responsible for the orderly management and disposal of acquired structures and/or land. Responsibilities include:

- Orderly management and disposal of acquired structures and/or land.
- Conveying (excess parcels)
- Licensing (use of air space)
- Grant of easements
- Telecommunication issues (fiber optic/towers)
- Outdoor advertising control (billboards, etc.)

When practical, the Real Estate and Property Management Section settles claims through administrative settlements. This section also works closely with the Office of Special Counsel with litigation cases, legal settlements and the processing of court judgements.

### Major Milestones - 1998:

- Improved Access (I 95 Ramps) - Successfully negotiated and acquired (by deed) four integral parcels, negotiations ongoing for last parcel (AMTRAK).
- Relocated Route 403 (Quonset/Davisville) - Successfully negotiated and acquired PRM Concrete Company (major parcel) through the process of “friendly condemnation.”
- US Route 1/Route 4 - Successfully negotiated, acquired (by deed) and relocated 12 properties/property owners.
- Established the beginning of a comprehensive inventory of State owned property under the control of RIDOT, inclusive of improved and vacant parcels.
- Aggressively marketed excess RIDOT owned property.
- Licensed several sites Statewide for the erection of telecommunication towers (first in the State).

Year	Acquisitions	Relocations	Court Awards	Administrative /Settlements	Miscellaneous Settlements	<u>Total</u>
1997	\$3,713,086	\$85,072	\$961,047	\$444,785	\$2,500	\$5,206,490
1998	\$10,739,986	\$399,385	\$653,720	\$34,020	\$53,380	\$11,880,491

## CONTRACT ADMINISTRATION

Contract Administration serves to establish formal business arrangements between RIDOT and suppliers of all major goods and services the Department deems necessary to purchase from the private sector. To do so requires:

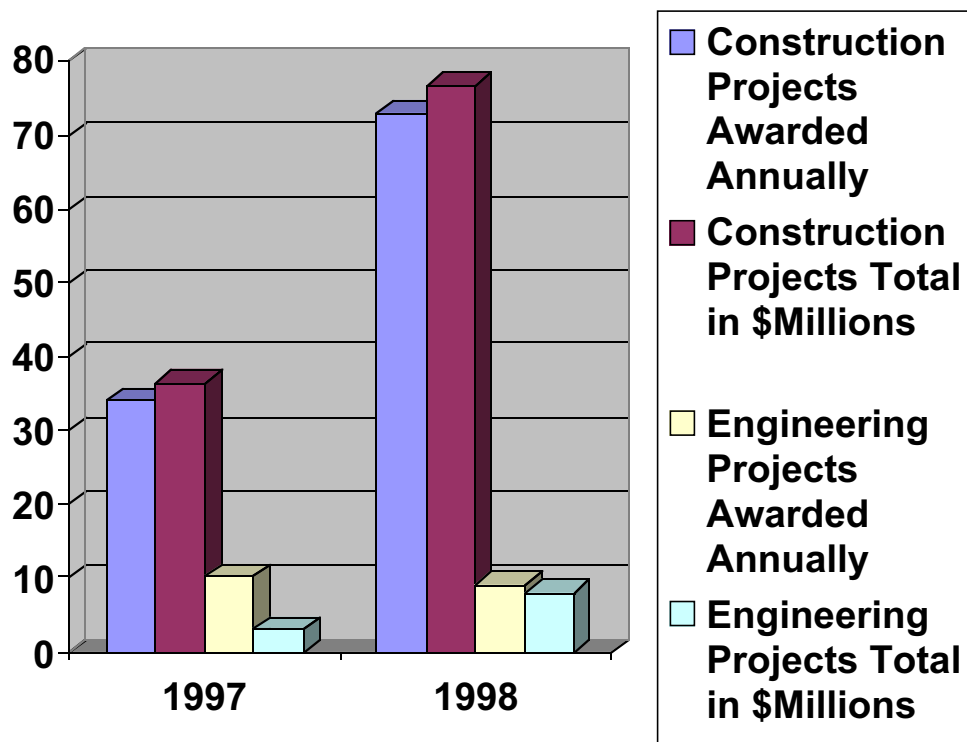
- Direct participation in a competitive selection process in adherence to all applicable Federal and State procurement requirements and
- The establishment of contract documents which best serve the State’s interest toward accomplishing the initiative at hand.

Most typically this includes the administration of requests-for-proposal to engage suitable professional engineering services and competitive bids to hire general construction contractors to respec-

tively design and complete construction projects on the State's roads and bridges. This occurs in coordination with the Department of Administration's Office of Purchases.

#### Major Milestones - FY 98:

- Successful implementation of RIDOT's annual construction project workload. A total of 73 construction projects were awarded this year valued at total of \$76.6 million; this volume and dollar value are more than double the experience for the prior fiscal year's total program.
- One-year milestone elapsed for conducting business under the updated *Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction, 1997 Edition* published by RIDOT. This was the first major issuance of updated DOT specifications compiled in a single volume since 1971.
- Developed plans to bring RIDOT's procurement procedures into compliance with the Division of Purchases' computerized system known as the "Rhode Island Vendor Information Program" (RIVIP) introduced online in November, 1997.



## CLAIMS ADMINISTRATION

This section manages the Department's liability in regards to Contract Claims and Tort Claims.

Tort Claims - Involves all claims made in tort against the Department except claims involving Fleet vehicles covered by the State's insurer, and claims originating in Contractor or Permittee work zones.

- Tort Claims Database - Claims Administration also developed and currently maintains a comprehensive, shared, tort database for managing tort claims. This database currently consists of hundreds of individual records in over 50 different categories of tort claims going



back to 1996 (FY 98 first full year), and contains additional detailed information regarding the originating incident, the location, the type of vehicle, damages incurred, an assessment of liability, disposition, and a complete history. This office is capable of generating detailed reports, as may be required for identifying accident patterns, frequencies, claims approved, disapproved, individual claim history, etc.

- Liaison with the Legislative Joint Committee on Accounts & Claims - Claims Administration maintains a dialog in cooperation with the Joint Committee by providing the results of investigations via testimony or written report, as well as advising as to this office's recommended disposition.

Contract Claims - Claims Administration handles contract claims according to the Department's Contract Claims Procedure. This procedure is a component of the Department's Oversight Agreement with the Federal Highway Administration, and primarily involves construction contracts. Claims Administration becomes responsible when Operations is unable to resolve a dispute. This office investigates and prepares written decision papers and makes oral presentations involving detailed accounting, engineering, legal, and contract administration issues. If Claims Administration fails to resolve a dispute, the matter usually proceeds to arbitration or litigation, where this office may provide technical support and expert testimony.

### **FY 1998 Accomplishments:**

FY 1998 saw the fine-tuning of the management of tort claims via the computerized database begun the previous fiscal year. This has allowed for the almost instantaneous retrieval of the information necessary to respond to inquiries from claimants and other interested parties. It has also resulted in a regular turn around for most tort claims, once received in this office, within one month in accordance with our monthly tort claims process. Activity is logged and allows for the continual monitoring of processing. Uncertainty has been replaced by improved responsiveness.

As a result of the improvement with the tort claims process, and the addition of another staff member, our ability to invest the appropriate time into construction disputes has been enhanced. Towards the end of this fiscal year, Claims Administration has begun to address several more contract claims than would have been previously possible.

<b><u>POTHOLE CLAIMS:</u></b>	<b>FY 97</b>	<b>FY98</b>
Total Number Received .....	541 .....	304
Dollar Value .....	\$97,155 .....	\$74,262
Number Paid .....	537 .....	241
Dollar Value Paid .....	\$81,404 .....	\$39,844
Number Denied (Does Not Include Most Pothole Claims Denied by Maintenance) .....	4 .....	63
Dollar Value.....	\$ 2,971 .....	\$16,751

<b><u>TORT CLAIMS:</u></b>	<b>FY 97</b>	<b>FY98</b>
Total Number Received .....	162 .....	222
Dollar Value .....	\$86,225 .....	\$807,108
Number Paid .....	25 .....	33
Dollar Value Paid .....	\$ 3,734 .....	\$ 39,029
Number Denied .....	115 .....	189
Dollar Value .....	\$70,909 .....	\$716,627

<b><u>CONTRACT CLAIMS</u></b> (\$ in millions)	<b>FY 97</b>	<b>FY98</b>
Total Number Existing .....	17 .....	11 .....
Dollar Value .....	\$6 .....	\$4.5 .....
Number Closed .....	12 .....	2 .....
Dollar Value Paid .....	\$0.9 .....	\$ 0.14 .....

# Transportation Support Division

## MIS

The Management Information Systems (MIS) unit is comprised of Administrative, Programming, Technical Support and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) professionals, that are responsible for all computer and communication needs.

The Administrative staff manages the day to day activities of the unit. This includes ordering and maintaining an inventory for everything related to computer hardware and software and related supplies for the entire Department. They also ensure that the user receives their requested output and the data is backed up and stored safely.

The Programming unit maintains the timesheet system on the Data General while rewriting it to a PC platform. Many sections currently use the programmers services to develop a custom system to meet their needs.

The Technical Support unit maintains the Local Area Network (LAN) which is comprised of many servers that control the multitude of services to enable continuity to 450 DOT users as well as the Wide Area Network (WAN) and the World Wide Web (WWW). The staff continues to automate the needs of the Department, which includes networking new computers, maintaining/upgrading older computers and software, along with printers and various other computer peripheral. The procurement of telephone and data lines are managed by this unit, in addition to maintaining the definity audix telephone system and conversant.

The GIS unit is striving to unite the Department through cartography services for many sections within DOT as well as outside the Department, i.e. Rhode Island GIS, Rhode Island Transportation Public Authority (RIPTA). MIS is beginning to develop a central data repository by integrating the many different databases which are layers of information for DOT maps.

## FACILITIES MANAGEMENT

This office is responsible for the planning and implementation of a comprehensive program for the replacement and/or maintenance of its structures. The Facilities Management Office is also charged with the responsibility of securing suitable office space for Department employees.

During 1998 this office prepared a comprehensive proposal for the relocation of all RIDOT operations. The document included cost estimates for lease, purchase and renovate or design and build options. Should the administration decide on one of these options, this office will be involved in many aspects of the plan, design and construction of the facility.

We also work closely with the State Building Code Commissioner's office as well as the Governor's Commission on Disabilities to insure that all structures are in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (A.D.A.) Code. One example is the recent placement of visually impaired signage in all RIDOT structures throughout the state.

## EXTERNAL AUDIT AND REVIEW

The primary function of External Audit and Review is to examine contract costs submitted by various external entities, such as utility companies, engineering consultants, and municipalities.

A computerized audit inventory tracking system is now used to facilitate tracking, scheduling, and evaluation of audit projects.

In 1998 External Audit and Review further reduced the backlog of unaudited projects and is in the process of performing interim contract audits to facilitate the finalization process.





*Prepared by the Rhode Island Department of Transportation, Communications Office  
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